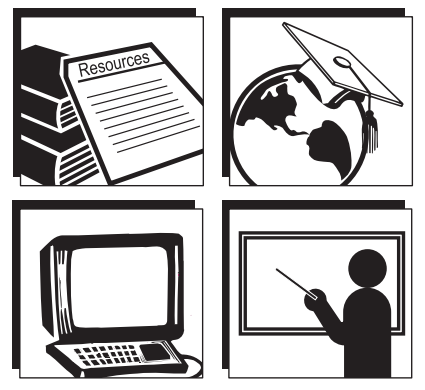**⊕EPA**

Getting Involved in Environmental Education

Things Educators Can Do

1. Educate yourself about the environment and environmental education

   A few suggestions:

   - Search the World Wide Web (WWW) for environmental education information and resource materials
   - Get copies of environmental education publications from EPA and state and local agencies and organizations in your state
   - Obtain environmental education materials that have been highly rated using the field's guidelines or conduct your own evaluation using these guidelines
   - Contact teachers, education officials, nonprofit organizations, state agencies, and others to find out what environmental education efforts are already underway in your community
   - Participate in environmental education professional development opportunities (e.g., teacher education workshops)
   - Visit local museums, parks, nature centers, zoos, aquariums, and botanical gardens for exhibits, lectures, or special events focused on environmental issues
   - Enroll in classes that teach about the environment
   - Find out about local environmental issues by participating in community meetings and events
   - Join a national or state environmental education professional association and attend their conferences

2. Teach about the environment in your school or community

   A few suggestions:

   - Work with teachers, school officials, community organizations, state agencies, and others to help you design an environmental education course or program in your school or community
   - Invite local university professors and researchers to visit your classroom to talk about local and global environmental issues
   - Look for award programs and contests that will engage your students in learning about the environment
   - Search for grants and other funding opportunities from state and federal agencies, foundations, and private companies to support your teaching efforts

3. Use environmental education to improve education

A few suggestions:

- Tie classroom learning to real-life experiences about local or other broader environmental issues
- Use investigative, hands-on/minds-on, student-centered, and cooperative learning instructional methods that actively engage the learner in local environmental issues
- Use a local or broader environmental issue to develop the learner's critical thinking, problem solving, and effective decision-making skills
- Develop or adapt an interdisciplinary curriculum which uses the environment as an integrating context for teaching across all subject areas (e.g., science, language arts, and the social sciences)
- Use environmental education to meet national and state standards (e.g., in math, science, and social studies) which emphasize inquiry and assessment
- Use environmental education materials that are consistent with the field's environmental education guidelines and correlate these materials to your state's or school district's academic standards (or obtain copies of existing correlations)
- Use the field's learner outcome guidelines to assist you in determining what environmental concepts to teach at specific grade levels and how to correlate these guidelines to your state's or school district's academic standards

4. Communicate the educational benefits of environmental education to your colleagues and education decision-makers

A few suggestions:

- Invite other educators and education decision-makers into your classroom or community to share information and resource materials
- Make presentations to your school departments or at faculty meetings, "back-to-school" nights, and school fairs
- Look for award programs and contests that enable you to communicate the successes of your program to others
- Introduce environmental education to your professional education association or support its existing efforts by writing an article for their newsletter or giving a presentation at their conferences

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A Few Suggestions on People and Organizations to Contact

Environmental Education World Wide Web Sites

- **EE-Link** contains EE information and resources and links to other EE sites (< http://eelink.net>).
- **EdGateway** provides information and promotes discussions on math, science, and ties between environmental education and education reform (< http://www.edgateway.net>).
- **EPA's Office of Environmental Education** (OEE) web site provides information about EPA's EE programs (< http://www.epa.gov/enviroed>); the EPA web site contains additional educational pages for kids, students, and teachers (< http://www.epa.gov>).
- The **ERIC Clearinghouse on Science, Math, and Environmental Education** web site provides summary information on resources in their clearinghouse (< http://www.ericse.org/>).

EPA Environmental Education Publications

- **EPA's Office of Environmental Education** has a list of some EE publications which are free to the public. Obtain the list by contacting OEE at (202) 260-4965 or visiting OEE's web site at < http://www.epa.gov/enviroed>. Many of these EE publications can be obtained by contacting the **National Center for Environmental Publications and Information** at (800) 490-9198 or ordering on line at < http://www.epa.gov/ncepihom/orderpub.html>.

Environmental Education Guidelines

- The **North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)** is developing EE guidelines for educational materials, learner outcomes for grades K-12, and educator preparation. Also, they have published "EE Collection: A Review of Resources for Educators, Volumes 1, 2, and 3" which apply the materials guidelines to widely available EE materials. A companion volume titled "The Biodiversity Collection: A Review of Resources for Educators" has been produced by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), in association with NAAEE, to highlight exemplary educational materials that focus on biodiversity and related issues. Visit the NAAEE, EPA OEE, and WWF web sites for information on the guidelines and how to obtain copies of various publications (< http://www.naaee.org>, < http://www.epa.gov/enviroed>, and < http://wwfus.org>).

- **Project Learning Tree, Project WET, and Project WILD** have developed correlations between their EE materials and some national and state academic standards. Contact Tess Erb, Project Learning Tree, (202) 463-2457 (phone), elizabeth_erb@plt.org (E-mail), or < http://www.plt.org> (WWW site); Sandra DeYounge, Project WET, (406) 994-1913 (phone), rwwsr@montana.edu (E-mail), or < http://www. montana.edu:80/wwwwet/> (WWW site); and Gwyn Rowland Rozzelle, Project WILD, (301) 527-8900 (phone), natpwild@igc.apc.org (E-mail), or < http://www.project wild.org> (WWW site).

Professional Development Opportunities

- The **Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP),** funded by EPA, is a consortium of nearly a dozen organizations and universities that delivers EE training to education professionals across the country. EETAP is managed by NAAEE and includes partners such as Project Learning Tree, Project WILD, and Project WET. Contact EETAP, (202) 884-8828 (phone), questions@eetap.org (E-mail), or < http://eetap.org> (WWW site).

Environmental Education Programs at the State Level

- The **National Environmental Education Advancement Project (NEEAP)** supports the development of EE strategic plans and comprehensive programs in 26 states. Contact Abby Ruskey, (715) 346-4179 (phone), aruskey @uwsp.edu (E-mail), or < http:// www.neeap.uwsp.edu> (WWW site).

- The **State Education and Environment Roundtable (SEER)** supports state department of education EE efforts in 12 states, especially schools that use the environment to integrate its curriculum. Contact Dr. Gerald Lieberman, (619) 676-0272 (phone), gerald@seer.org (E-mail), or < http://www.seer.org> (WWW site).

National and State Environmental Education Associations

- **NAAEE** is an association of professional environmental educators. For membership information, contact Janet Thoreen, (937) 676-2514 (phone), jthoreen@erinet.com (E-mail), or < http://naaee.org> (WWW site). In addition, NAAEE has a **State Affiliates Program** which is a network of 54 state and provincial EE associations across the U.S. and Canada. This program can assist you in locating an EE contact in your state. For State Affiliates

Program information, contact Carolyn Cleveland, 202-884-8821 (phone) or ccleveland@aed.org (E-mail).

- The **National Association for Interpretation (NAI)** is an association of professional interpreters. NAI includes an Environmental Education Section. Contact NAI at (970) 484-8283 (phone) or < http://www.interpretnet.org> (WWW site).

Conservation and Other Organizations

- National conservation organizations, such as the **World Wildlife Fund, National Audubon Society, World Resources Institute, Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation (NWF)**, and others, have information and programs on various environmental issues, training opportunities, and educational materials. NWF's Conservation Directory is a useful resource for getting information about these and other conservation organizations (800-477-5560).

- The **Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)** has a listing of more than 180 accredited institutions that offer programs and materials on environmental topics. Contact AZA at (301) 907-7777 or a zoo or aquarium in your community.

Funding Opportunities

- **EPA's Office of Environmental Education** provides grants to support EE programs. Contact Diane Berger, (202) 260-8619 (phone), berger.diane@epa.gov (E-mail), or < http://www.epa.gov/enviroed> (WWW site).

- The **National Environmental Education and Training Foundation (NEETF)** provides challenge grants to support EE projects. Contact Michelle Harvey at (202) 628-8200 (phone), harvey@neetf.org (E-mail), or < http://www.neetf.org> (WWW site).

- **Resources for Global Sustainability, Inc.** publishes an annual "Directory of Environmental Grantmaking Foundations" which contains information on private foundations that fund environmental projects (800-724-1857).

- Some **state natural resource and education agencies** offer grants for environmental education projects. Contact your state agency for more information.